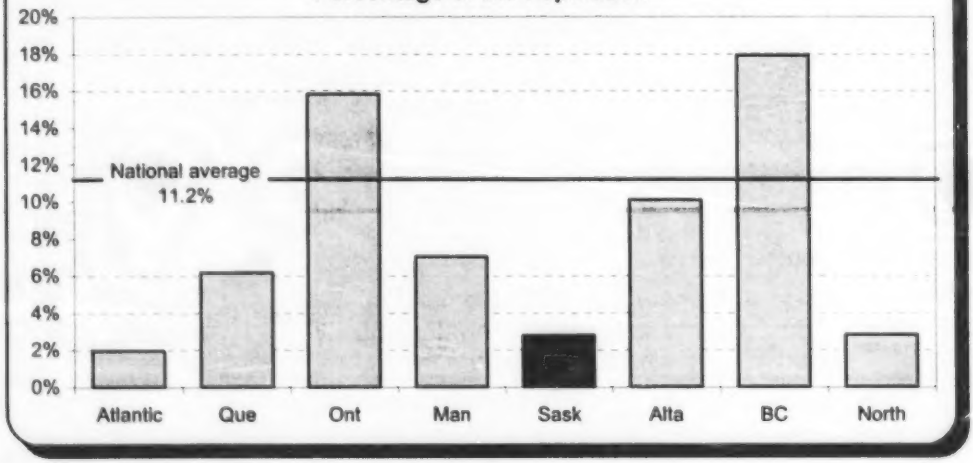
Visible Minority Women

The great variation in backgrounds, nationality, education, and labour force activity among visible minority women make generalizations difficult; nevertheless, some interesting characteristics emerge upon detailed examination.

Reliable statistical information about women who are members of a visible minority is limited to the Statistics Canada Census, conducted every five years. The Census definition of "visible minority" coincides with the concept used in most employment equity programs. A person is considered a member of a visible minority in the Census if they indicated that their ancestry was Black, South Asian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Southeast Asian, Filipino or other Pacific Islander, Arab or West Asian, Latin American, or a combination of these. In this definition, Aboriginal women are not considered as members of a visible minority.

In 1996, there were 26,950 members of a visible minority in Saskatchewan, 2.8% of the population. As Figure 1 shows, the proportion of the province's population who are members of a visible minority is well below the national average of 11.2% and well below the proportion in other prairie provinces. The visible minority population overlaps with the immigrant population a great deal – 59% of visible minority women were born outside of Canada.

Figure 1: Visible Minority Population (both sexes) as a Percentage of the Population

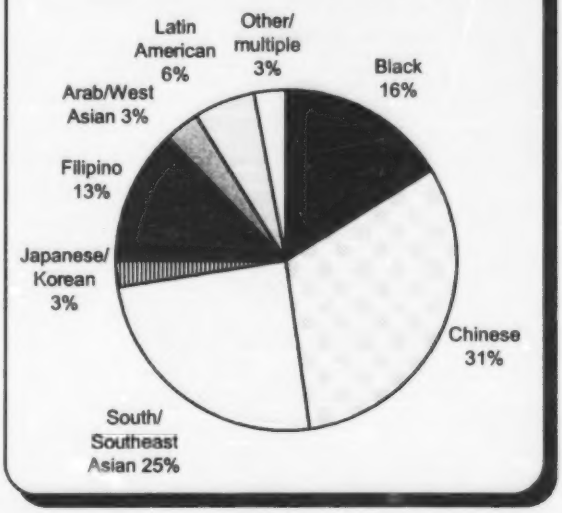


There are approximately the same number of women as men in the visible minority population. In 1996, there were 13,225 women and 13,720 men who were members of a visible minority. The statistics that follow describe these 13,225 women relative to other women in the province.

Ethnicity

The majority of visible minority women fall into two general ethnic groups -- Chinese and South/Southeast Asian (see Figure 2). The Black population constitutes 16% of visible minority women and those with Filipino ethnic origin 13%.

Figure 2: Ethnicity of Saskatchewan Women in Visible Minority Groups, 1996

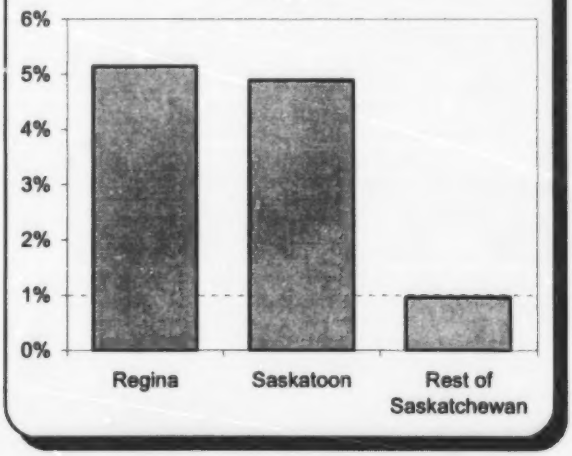


Residence

Regina and Saskatoon are the most common residences for visible minority women. The Regina and Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Areas[1] are home to four out of five visible minority women.

Figure 3 shows that visible minority women make up less than 1% of the population outside the two major cities.

Figure 3: Women in Visible Minority Groups as a Percentage of all Women, 1996



Age Distribution

Figure 4 shows that visible minority women are noticeably younger in age, on average, than other Saskatchewan women. Three-quarters (77%), for example, are under the age of 45 and 42% are under 25 years of age. This compares with 66% and 27% for all women in the province.

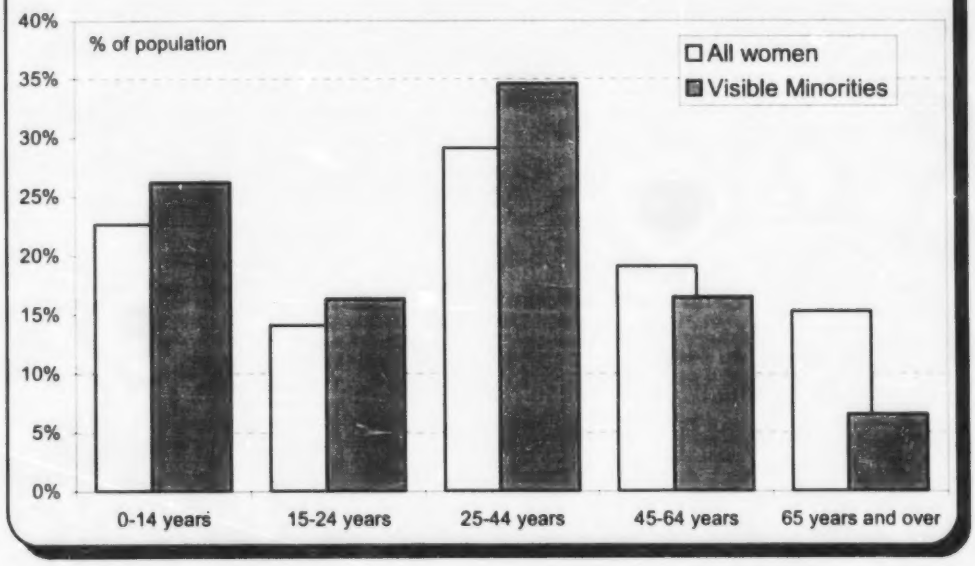
The different age distribution has a noticeable effect on other socioeconomic characteristics.

Family Status

One consequence of the age distribution of the visible minority population is the nature of family structures. Almost four out of five visible minority women live in a family situation either as a wife or common law partner (41%) or as a daughter (38%). One in 10 live in a "non-family" situation, that is, with a non-relative or a distant relative (see Figure 5).

Overall, visible minority women are somewhat more likely than other women to be in a family arrangement (89% compared with 83%) and less likely to be living alone (5% compared with 11%). They are somewhat less likely (6% compared with 7%) to be lone parents.

Figure 4: Age Distribution for Women in Visible Minority Groups, 1996

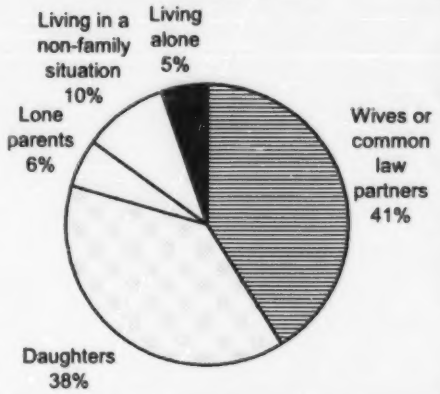


Citizenship and Language

Three-quarters of visible minority women were Canadian citizens in 1996 and six out of 10 were born outside Canada.

English is the "mother tongue" among 35% of visible minority women but it has become the "home language" for 54% and is understood by 91%[2]. Women in visible minority groups are more likely to be bilingual in Canada's two official languages than other women in Saskatchewan.

Figure 5: Living Arrangements for Saskatchewan Women in Visible Minority Groups, 1996



Mobility

Visible minority women who have recently migrated to Canada are no more likely to move than other women. Between 1991 and 1996, 39% of visible minority women changed their home, the same proportion as other women in Saskatchewan.

Education

Women who are members of a visible minority were, in 1996, more likely than other Saskatchewan women to have a post-secondary education, particularly a university degree (see Figure 6). About two in five (40%) are post-secondary graduates compared with 37% of all women in Saskatchewan and 22% have a university degree compared with 10% of all women in Saskatchewan.

Visible minority women with a post-secondary degree, diploma, or certificate tend to specialize in somewhat different fields than other Saskatchewan women (see Figure 7). Compared with all Saskatchewan women, visible minority women are more likely to have a degree, diploma, or certificate in the science and technology fields and in the humanities. They are less likely to specialize in business and commerce or in the "education, recreation and counselling" group.

Figure 6: Highest Level of Formal Education, Adult Women, 1996

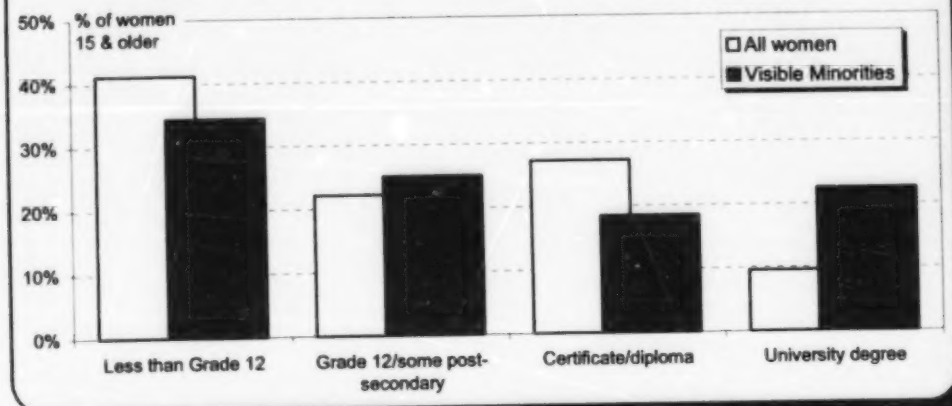
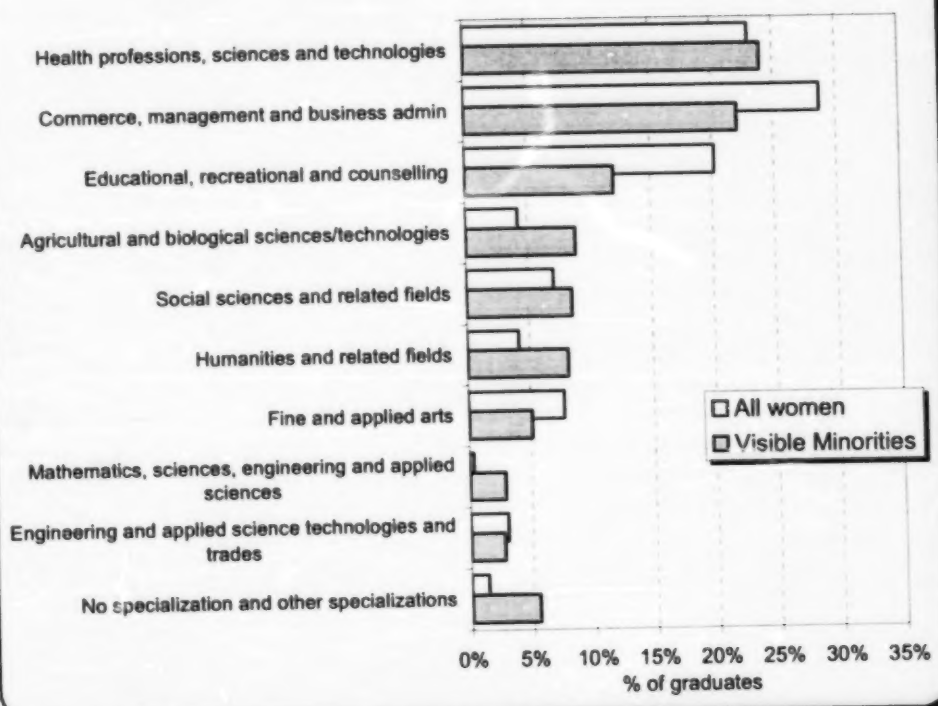


Figure 7: Area of Specialization, Post-Secondary Graduates



Women in visible minority groups are also more likely to be attending school (full-time or part-time, university or technical school) than other women in Saskatchewan (see Figure 8).

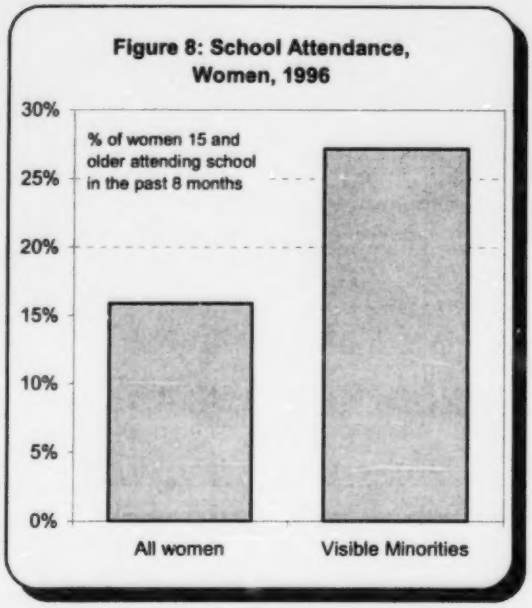


Figure 8: School Attendance, Women, 1996

Employment

In the spring of 1996, 61% of visible minority women were in the labour force[3], that is, either employed or unemployed (see Figure 9). This is the same as the participation rate for all Saskatchewan women. The unemployment rate[4] for visible minority women (9%) is, however, higher than the provincial average for all women (7%).

Women who are members of a visible minority group, in spite of their high levels of completed education, are concentrated in low paying service sector industries. These industries include the accommodation and food services group and the "other services" group, a category that includes domestic help[5].

Almost one in four visible minority women works in the accommodation and food services group compared with 11% for all Saskatchewan women (see Figure 10). They are less likely than other women to be employed in:

- primary industries (including farming);
- wholesale/retail trade; and
- education services.

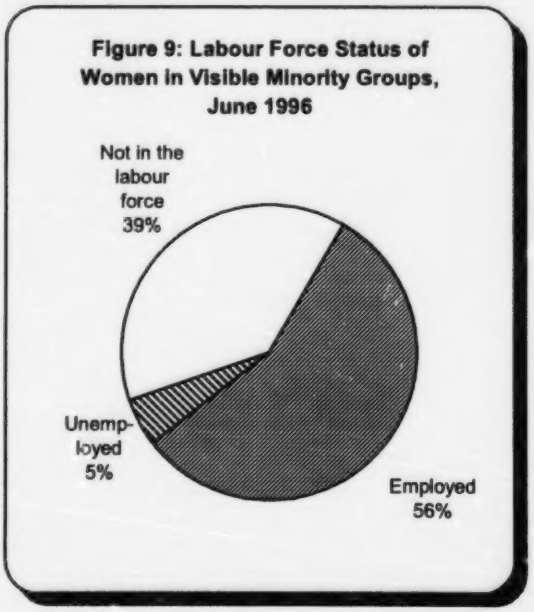
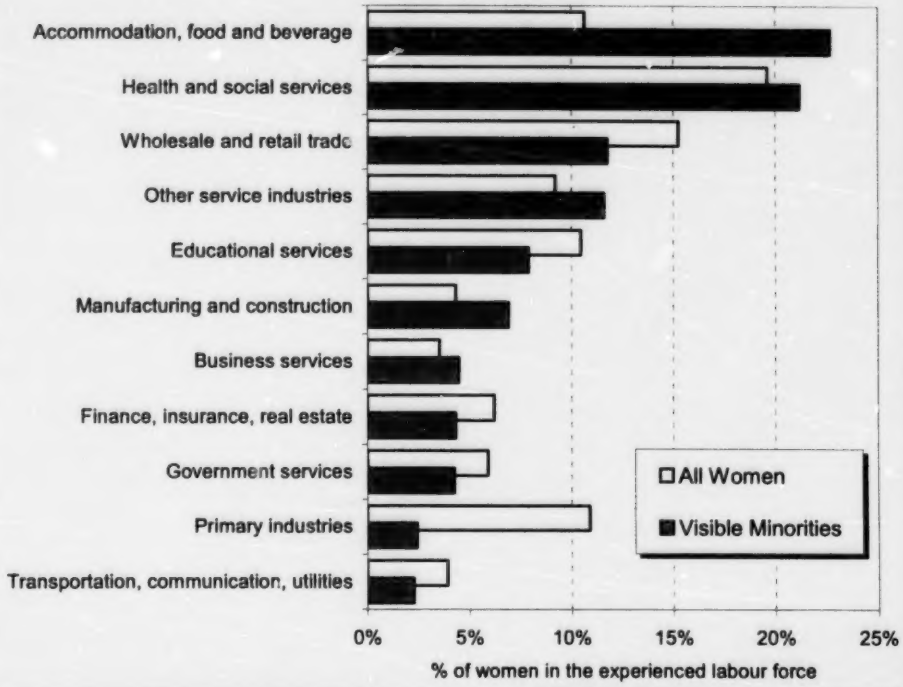


Figure 9: Labour Force Status of Women in Visible Minority Groups, June 1996

Figure 10: Experienced Labour Force by Industry, Saskatchewan Women, 1996



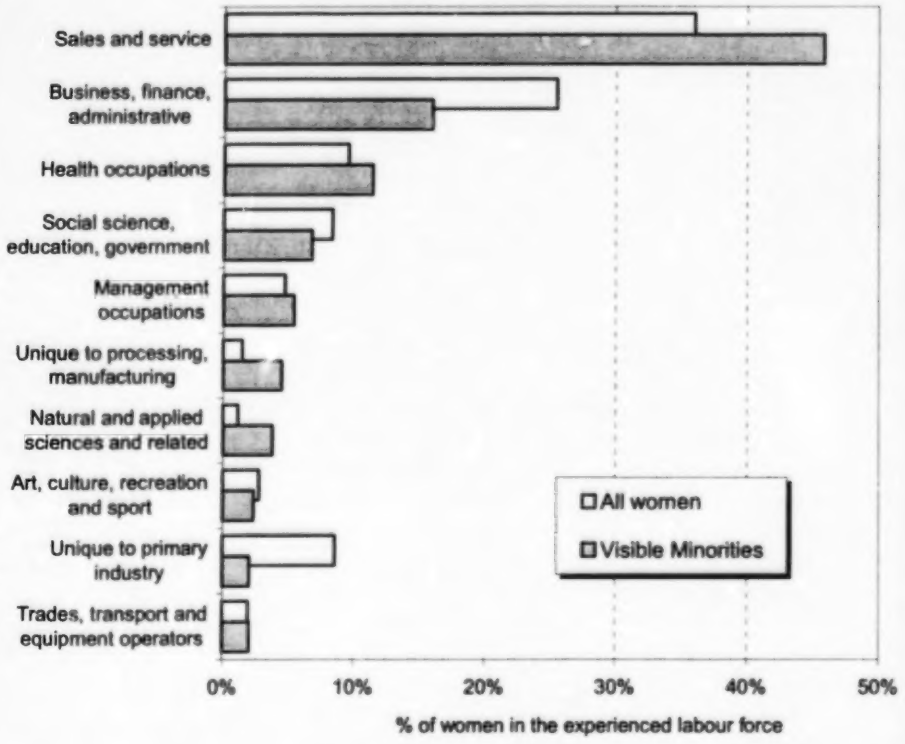
On an occupational level, visible minority women are less likely than other women to work in (see Figure 11):

- business, finance, and administrative positions; or
- occupations unique to the primary industry (including farming).

They are more likely than other women to be working in:

- sales and service occupations;
- occupations in natural and applied sciences; and
- occupations unique to the manufacturing and processing industries.

Figure 11: Experienced Labour Force by Occupation Group, Saskatchewan Women, 1996



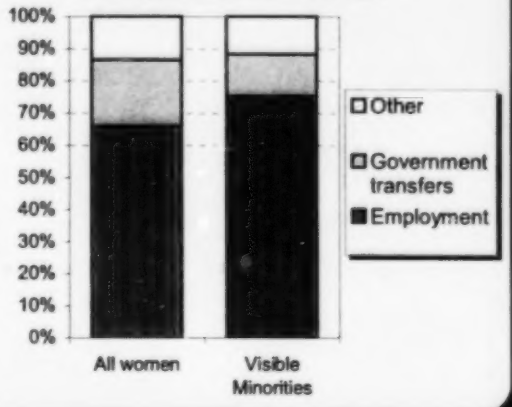
Employment by Industry and Occupation

Statistics for employment in industry and occupation groups require careful interpretation. The industry group refers to the type of business in which the person is employed whereas the occupation group refers to their duties. Many occupation groups cross industry boundaries. In the retail trade industry group, for example, there are people in managerial occupations as well as people in sales occupations and service occupations.

Income

On average, visible minority women had 1995 annual incomes well below the average for all Saskatchewan women – $13,400 compared with $15,800. The information displayed in Figure 12 through Figure 15 shows that women in visible minority groups tend to be at the low end of the income scale in spite of their higher levels of completed education.

Figure 12: Sources for Personal Income, 1995, Saskatchewan Women



Visible minority women are less likely than other women to receive a substantial portion of their income from government transfers[6] (see Figure 12). On average 13% of personal income is derived from government transfers compared with 21% for all women in Saskatchewan. This is partly a consequence of the fact that many are in younger age groups and therefore do not qualify for the Canada Pension Plan or Old Age Security payments.

Figure 13 shows that the lower average income is entirely attributable to the disproportionately large number of visible minority women with annual incomes in 1995 of less than $10,000. More than one-half of visible minority women over the age of 15 have annual gross income under $10,000.

Figure 14 shows that this, in turn, is a consequence of lower employment earnings. Among those with employment income 70% had annual incomes under $20,000 in 1995 compared with 65% of all Saskatchewan women.

Figure 13: Distribution of Personal Incomes in 1995, Adult Women in Saskatchewan

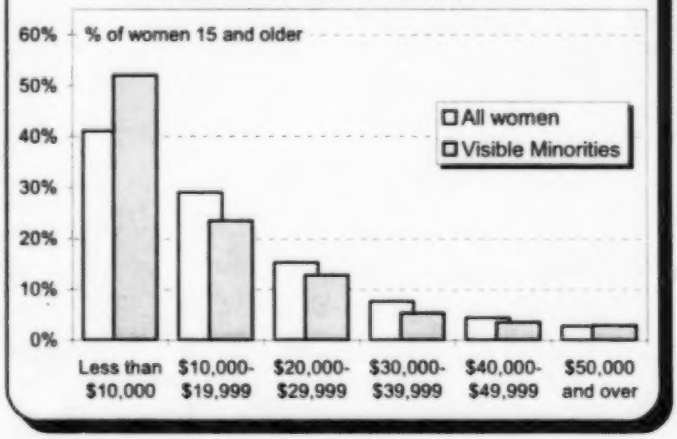
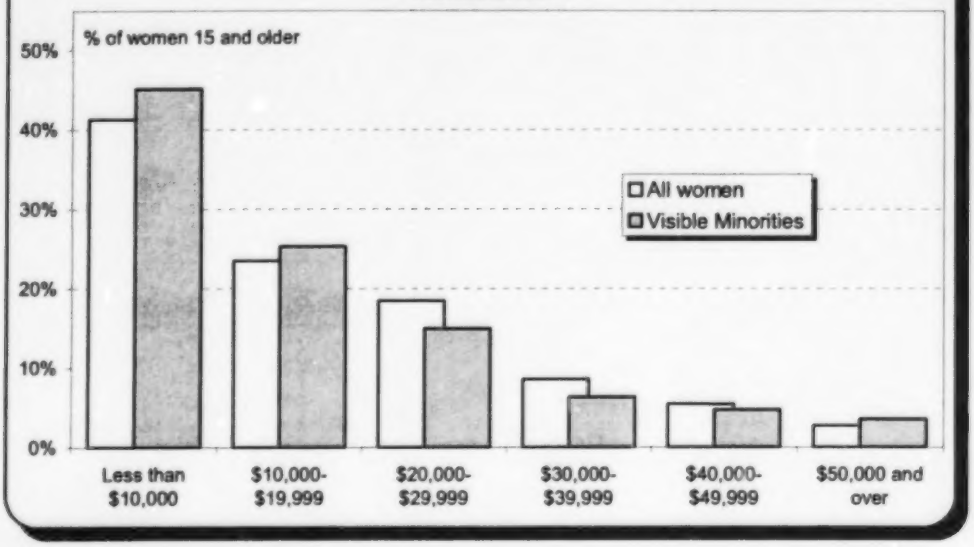


Figure 14: Distribution of Employment Income in 1995, Adult Women in Saskatchewan

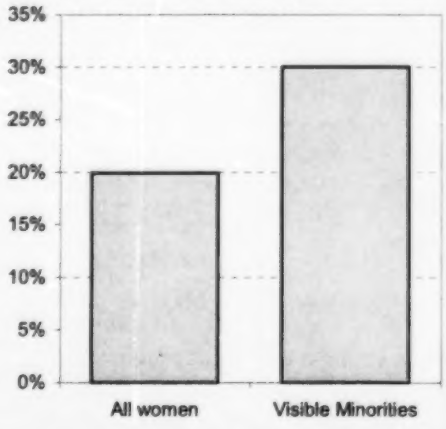


The lower incomes translate into higher levels of poverty among visible minority women. In 1995, 30% of visible minority women had incomes below the low income cutoff (LICO) which is often used as an indicator of poverty (see Figure 15).

Note: Statistics Canada's Low Income Cutoff

The low income cutoff (LICO) is a measure of income inequality. Based on family size and geographic location, it is the income level below which a family would be expected to spend an above-average portion of their income on basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. As an example, the LICO in 1995 for a city the size of Regina was $14,473 for a person living alone and $22,500 for a family of three.

Figure 15: Percentage of Women Below the Low Income Cutoff in 1995



Notes

Source: These data are derived from the 1996 Statistics Canada Census. Visible minority status is based on the ethnicity question which is on the "long form" of the Census so they are, in effect, based on a 20% sample of households. The question is "To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person's ancestors belong?" Only persons living in private dwellings receive the long form so these statistics exclude those living in so-called "collective" dwellings including, for example, prisons, special care homes, hotels, homes for the disabled, and group homes.

1. *The Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) for Regina and Saskatoon include both the cities and the surrounding "bedroom" communities and rural municipalities. In the case of Regina, the CMA includes, for example, the RM of Sherwood, Lumsden, Balgonie, White City, Edenwold, Pense and their respective rural municipalities. In the case of Saskatoon, the CMA includes, for example, Osler, Martensville, Delisle, Dundurn, Colonsay, and the associated rural munipalities.*

2. *The "mother tongue" is the first language learned in childhood and still understood. The "home language" is the language spoken most often at home. Language knowledge refers to the ability to conduct a conversation.*

3. *The "participation rate" is the percentage of the adult population (15 & older) that is in the labour force, that is, either employed or unemployed.*

4. *The "unemployment rate" is the percentage of the labour force that is unemployed.*

5. *Employment by industry and occupation are based on the number of women in the "experienced labour force". The industry and occupation are recorded for the current job or, if not employed, the most recent job in the past 18 months.*

6. *Government transfers include, for example, social assistance, employment insurance, disability benefits, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and Workers' Compensation benefits. "Other" income includes, for example, investment income, private pension income, income from rental properties, inheritances, and alimony payments.*

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